



GYRO SUPREME



ATHENIAN BURGER



SOUVLAKI SPECIAL



BAKLAVA ALA GREEK AND SOPAPITAS

# THE CORNER GRILL

BY DANNY FAIRCHILD

"Greece is the word."  
—The Brothers Gibb

When people think of Dubuque, they don't think of Greek cuisine. Why not? It's right there in front of our noses which are catching a good whiff of the spinning gyro meat. I've lived in Dubuque over 15 years and nowhere I've lived has had as vibrant of Greek heritage (it should be noted I've always lived somewhere in Iowa), and even I think of so many other things before my mind lands on Greek cuisine as a defining characteristic of Dubuque.

Let's stop this foolishness now, shall we? Dubuque means Greek cuisine. It just does. Shut up and accept it. It shouldn't be hard to accept. In fact, we should all be accepting gyros and baklava into our face-mouths right now. Dubuque means Greek cuisine. And with The Corner Grill at our service, I'll go so far as to say that Dubuque means GOOD Greek cuisine.

Braving the storm of unrelenting street construction stands The Corner Grill at the corner of Elm and 17<sup>th</sup> Streets, a monument to all things Dubuque, including the Greek aspects of it. Everything about it screams of the Dubuqueiest aspects of Dubuque, from the decor to the bartender serving double duty as a server and telling the daddiest of dad jokes:

Q. Why did the cheese curd cross the road?

A. To get out of the whey.

The question will be asked, "How authentic can it be?" A fair question. A douchey question, but I'll allow it. To find the answer, we must go to a much larger city with a much larger Greek community: Chicago. Zoom in a little more and you'll find Greektown. Zoom in even more and you'll find Halsted Street. That's where Yanni and his team get their gyro meat. It's THAT authentic.

Now shut up and eat. But make sure you visit a cash machine before you come on down as The Corner Grill doesn't accept cards. There is an ATM in-house if you forget, but...y'know...fees.

Let's get down to the food, yo.

Here there be Coke products. And lemonade. And iced tea. I usually don't make special note of iced tea. As long as it's iced and it's tea, then who cares, right? But friends: I must comment on the iced tea. Yanni and Co. brew it—get this—on the grill. I know, so what? A heat source is a heat source, right? Maybe. But the results speak for themselves. They also know not to friggin' boil your tea. They get it to a good steeping temperature. And this isn't some ultra exotic jasmine pearl orange pekoolong here. This is just the tea you've come to love and expect. Doesn't matter. They still take care to brew it right. It's a small thing, but it should be appreciated. Appreciate it, won't you?

We started things off with some spanakopita, which is a blend of spinach and feta wrapped in filo dough. I'm here to tell you, friend: There is absolutely no better way to eat spinach. I stake my honor on it.

First entree: The gyro. We went ahead and test drove the gyro supreme because there was four of us and neither of us wanted to sleep on the gyro. The gyro supreme falls under the "Mega-Sized Sandwiches" heading of the menu, and it lives up to the name. Gyros are kiiliind of open-faced sandwiches anyway, but with the gyro supreme, there's no "kiiliind of" about it. You ain't folding that thing. It's open season on open-face, y'all. You may even doubt there's a pita under all that meat and veggies and feta. Keep digging. It's there. Ever want to eat just a pile of gyro meat? You do now, don't you? Go get you some. What I'm saying is The Corner Grill does not skimp. Perish the thought.

Next up was the souvlaki special. Souvlaki is a Greek street food consisting of marinated meat grilled on skewers. Shish kebab, right? Different culture, but culinarily similar. Except shish kebab almost always has veggies on the skewers. Souvlaki almost always doesn't. Again, very Dubuque. The souvlaki special features chicken. I don't know about you, but almost every skewered and grilled chicken thingy I've ever had has been dry as an episode of *Seinfeld*, marinated or no. I have found the holy grail of moist (sorry for using that word) grilled, skewered chicken. It's at The Corner Grill. Marinated and grilled to perfection.

Then the burgers. The Corner Grill may not be your top choice for burgers, but if you're out with your pals and you're feeling like gyros and your friends are screaming for burgers, there's no reason you can't all be happy. The bun was a little large for the patty, but that was the only complaint with the Athenian burger we sampled. It's their fresh chuck patty with Greek seasoning and it's delicious. Do yourself a favor and upgrade to onion rings.

For your Lenten delights (again: Dubuque) there's the breaded cod

sandwich. And as this is The Corner Grill, that means it's getting served on a pita, yo. It's an excellent twist on the usual fish sandwich you get during Lent. And the cod is breaded and fried a beautiful golden brown and is super flaky. Nom.

The baklava is homemade and is dangerous. If you eat it, you will want to eat it again. Flaky filo dough layered with spices and walnuts and sweetened to high heaven with honey? You're already there, aren't you?

The restrooms are very clean, though the automated towel dispenser didn't work on the day in question. But paper towels were readily available and truth be told, I hate those dispensers, anyway. Both restrooms (I peeked in the ladies' whilst it was unoccupied) have full-length mirrors so you can make sure you look cool before going back to eating. There was even some Kenneth Cole body spray available.

All-in-all, I can't for the life of me figure out how Dubuque isn't known, at least within the Tri-States, as a gyro destination. How can such deliciousness be overlooked? It's Greek to me! HAHAAHA-HAAAA! I'M SO FUNNY, YOU GUYZ! ■



**THE CORNER GRILL**  
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**Hours:** Tue–Fri: 11:30 AM–8:30 PM;  
Sat: 11:30 AM–4:30 PM

**DANNY FAIRCHILD**  
DANNY DOESN'T TAKE CRAP FROM NOBODY, BUT HE'LL TAKE FOOD FROM ALMOST ANYBODY. IF YOU WANT TO FIGHT DANNY, OR FEED HIM NOM-NOMS, EMAIL HIM AT [DINING@DUBUQUE365.COM](mailto:DINING@DUBUQUE365.COM).

